

gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

North Elementary School continues to be one of the best performing schools in the State of Indiana. It has been named an Indiana Four Star School several times.

In 2014, North Elementary School's ISTEP+ pass rate for English/Language Arts scores increased by over 7 percent to a 94.8 percent. Mathematics scores increased to 97.2 percent combined for third through fifth grades.

North Elementary School's effectiveness can be found in its holistic approach and dedication to student achievement. North Elementary staff, students, and students' families work together to teach and instill values that develop strong character including integrity, responsibility, effort, and kindness. With some of the highest English and mathematics scores in Indiana, North Elementary School is a stellar example of the benefits that result from dedication, motivation, collaboration, and family partnership in education.

I would like to recognize North Elementary School principal, Terri Waugaman, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and our communities well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate North Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING OAK TRACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to applaud Oak Trace Elementary School of Westfield, IN, for being recognized as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized over 7,500 public and nonpublic schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Oak Trace Elementary School continues to be one of the best performing schools in the State of Indiana. It has been named an Indiana Four Star School several times.

In 2014, Oak Trace Elementary School's ISTEP+ pass rate for English/Language Arts scores increased by over 2 percent to a full 100 percent. Mathematics scores increased to 98.7 percent combined for third through fourth grades.

Oak Trace Elementary School's effectiveness can be found in its holistic

approach and dedication to student achievement. Oak Trace staff, students, and students' families work together to teach and instill values that develop strong character including integrity, responsibility, effort, and kindness. With some of the highest English and mathematics scores in Indiana, Oak Trace Elementary School is a stellar example of the benefits that result from dedication, motivation, collaboration, and family partnership in education.

I would like to acknowledge Oak Trace Elementary School principal, Robin Lynch, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and our communities well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Oak Trace Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNUAL NEWPORT WINTER CARNIVAL

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 100th annual Winter Carnival held in Newport, NH.

The maiden Newport Winter Carnival was held in 1916, making it the oldest continuous winter carnival in the country and the largest annual event in Newport. For over a week in early February, Newport will be transformed into a winter wonderland. Families, friends, and visitors will gather for this yearly celebration and participate in events that include the ice fishing derby, hockey games, Main Street 1 Mile Run, horseback riding demos, horse show tournament, and countless gatherings, dinners, and historic remembrances, capped off by fireworks to light up the winter sky.

The Newport Winter Carnival is one of New Hampshire's longest and most exciting winter events. The people of Newport are justifiably proud of this unique and treasured tradition. The carnival epitomizes the spirit of the Granite State and celebrates New Hampshire's beautiful landscape and snow-covered season. Providing winter-time fun for the residents of and visitors to our State, Newport's Winter Carnival brings warmth and cheer throughout the frosty month of February.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I join with the residents of Newport in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Winter Carnival. I commend the people of Newport for this great New Hampshire tradition and wish the town of Newport continued success for generations to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JIM SMITH

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the distinguished ca-

reer of a great South Dakotan, Mr. Jim Smith.

Jim was born in Aberdeen, SD, in 1930, and was raised in Pierre. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in 1952 before attending law school at George Washington University. While still in law school, Jim worked as an elevator operator in the U.S. Capitol until he became a legislative assistant to South Dakota Senator Karl Mundt. He eventually served as minority counsel to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. Upon graduation from law school, Jim became the associate Federal legislative counsel at the American Bankers Association from 1963 to 1968.

From 1969 to 1973, Jim headed the Treasury Department's Office of Congressional Relations, completing his tenure as Deputy Undersecretary of the Department under three separate Secretaries. In 1971, Jim was awarded the Alexander Hamilton Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Treasury Department. He was appointed by President Nixon as the 23rd U.S. Comptroller of the Currency in 1973, where he served until the end of the Ford Administration. Jim returned to the Midwest in 1977 to serve as the Executive Vice President of the First Chicago Corporation.

In 1980, Jim reconnected with his old friend, Charls E. Walker, from their days at the American Bankers Association. Jim joined Mr. Walker's consulting firm, Charls Walker Associates, later renamed Walker/Free Associates, until he formed The Smith-Free Group with Jim Free in 1995. For the past 35 years, Jim has advocated for a diverse range of issues before the Federal Government, including pro bono efforts on behalf of victims of Bernie Madoff's Ponzi scheme.

Jim came to Washington during President Eisenhower's administration, and his career has spanned 10 subsequent Presidents. His reputation as a modest, soft-spoken, and principled man is a testament to his South Dakota roots. He embodies the strong-willed, hard-working, and good-natured characteristics that all South Dakotans share; and his life story proves the continued resilience of the American Dream.

Jim is retiring to spend more time with his wife of 37 years, Karen, along with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I would like to thank him for his service to both South Dakota and the country and congratulate him on a well-deserved retirement.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a treaty which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:26 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 614. An act to provide access to and use of information by Federal agencies in order to reduce improper payments, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1321. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the manufacture and introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of rinse-off cosmetics intentionally added plastic microbeads.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3678. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oranges and Grapefruit Grown in Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas; Decreased Assessment Rate" (Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0035) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3679. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Cotton and Tobacco Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defining Bona Fide Cotton Spot Markets for the World Cotton Futures Contract" ((RIN0581-AD38) (Docket No. AMS-CN-14-0050)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3680. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Soybean Promotion and Research: Amend the Order to Adjust Representation on the United Soybean Board" (Docket No. AMS-LPS-15-0016) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3681. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Domestic Dates Produced or

Packed in Riverside County, California; Decreased Assessment Rate" (Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0034) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3682. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, et al.; Revision of Exemption Requirements" (Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0046) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 20, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3683. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Grapes Grown in a Designated Area of Southeastern California and Imported Table Grapes; Relaxation of Handling Requirements" (Docket No. AMS-FV-14-0031) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 20, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3684. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hardwood Lumber and Hardwood Plywood Promotion, Research, and Information Order: Termination of Rulemaking Proceeding" (Docket No. AMS-FV-11-0074) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 20, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3685. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal year 2011 Procurement, Marine Corps and Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps, funds, and was assigned Navy case number 14-01; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-3686. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, three (3) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Defense, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 19, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3687. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3688. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3689. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Community Planning and Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Changes to Accounting Requirements for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program" (RIN2506-AC39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on No-

vember 23, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3690. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Burundi; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3691. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment to the Export Administration Regulations to Add XBS Epoxy System to the List of 0Y521 Series; Technical Amendment to Update Other 0Y521 Items." (RIN0694-AG70) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3692. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Wassenaar Arrangement 2014 Plenary Agreements Implementation and Country Policy Amendments; Correction" (RIN0694-AG44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3693. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Walnuts Grown in California; Increased Assessment Rate" (Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0026) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3694. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Refinements to Policies and Procedures for Market-Based Rates for Wholesale Sales of Electric Energy, Capacity and Ancillary Services by Public Utilities" ((RIN1902-AE85) (Docket No. RM14-14)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 23, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3695. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cyber Security Event Notifications" (Regulatory Guide 5.83) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3696. A communication from the Admiral, Naval Reactors, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports relative to the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program's reports on environmental monitoring and radioactive waste disposal, radiation exposure, and occupational safety and health; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3697. A communication from the Deputy Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Contract Year 2016 Policy and Technical Changes to the Medicare Advantage and the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Programs" (RIN0938-AS20) received